



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.  
Director and Chief Medical Officer

FRED LEAF  
Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
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July 1, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.  
Director and Chief Medical Officer

for Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **MEDICAL MARIJUANA**

On June 14, 2005, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, directing the Department of Health Services, Sheriff's Department, and County Counsel to report to the Board in two weeks on the implications of the Supreme Court decision in Gonzales v. Raich for the implementation of Proposition 215 in Los Angeles County. County Counsel and the Sheriff are providing responses directly to your Board on this motion

SB 420 required the State Department of Health Services to establish a Medical Marijuana Program that issues identification cards to qualified persons. The statute provides that the local health department will receive and verify information about qualified persons for transmittal to the State. The State issues the cards and maintains a data base which state and local law enforcement can consult to verify eligible persons. The State has implemented the program in conjunction with several pilot counties.

Department staff spoke with the State DHS program staff. State staff indicated that their preliminary recommendation will be to promulgate the medical marijuana program policies, expand the program to other counties, and continue enrollment. However, this recommendation has not yet been reviewed and approved by senior department managers. County Counsel has informed us that if the State establishes the required administrative protocols, local health departments have a statutory duty to administer the program in accordance with the protocols.

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We will provide you with a further report on the implementation of Proposition 215 and SB 420 once we have written correspondence from the State. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let either of us know.

TLG:JEF:js  
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c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Sheriff  
Director of Regional Planning  
President, Business License Commission